

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

14 April 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Morning Meeting of 14 April 1969

[REDACTED]

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DD/I noted that he will be in touch with Mr. Kissinger again today on this week's scheduling of matters before the NSC. He noted that the U. S. policy/Japan item may be deferred in view of a reported DOD desire to review its position once again.

Godfrey related that the meeting of the ChiCom Party Congress has ended without any significant announcements and that our information is limited to that reported in the public medium.

Godfrey reported that the Soviet naval vessels scheduled to join the Mediterranean exercise are reported to still be in the Black Sea.

Godfrey noted that there is nothing more of significance to report from Prague but added that the Czech Politburo will be meeting in Prague on Wednesday.

[REDACTED] noted that USIB will meet this week and that there are no problems of coordination with respect to the two papers being considered (SNIE 40/50-69: Prospects for Regional Security Arrangements in East Asia Over the Next Five Years, and NIE 24-69: The Center-Left Experiment in Italy: Accomplishments, Shortcomings, and Prospects).

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DD/S related that the Daniels bill on CSC retirement benefits will probably pass. Maury noted that it has been reported out of the House committee and briefed on plans to obtain similar benefits for Agency personnel.

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Carver noted that elements of the 304th NVN Division are now reported opposite Khe Sanh. Godfrey commented on reports that the 304th may have a mechanized communications liaison station and observed that, if it involves the use of land-line communication, our coverage of troop movements may be inhibited.

Maury commented that Senator Jackson has indicated that he would like a briefing this week.

The Director expressed the hope that he will not have to go to the Hill this week to testify. Maury commented that any requirement to testify on the Safeguard system will probably be initiated by the proponents of the system.

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*The Director reviewed with Bross arrangements for the 17-18 April briefing of PFIAB. The Director asked the DD/S&T and D/ONE to be sure to include in their portions of the briefing the mention of their respective advisory panels, indicating the composition of each. The Director asked that we have on hand copies of the Beecher article in today's New York Times [redacted]

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[redacted] The Director asked that Bross meet with him later today to focus on the Director's input to the briefing.

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L. K. White

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Soviet Missile Deployment Puzzles Top U.S. Analysts

By WILLIAM BEECHER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 13 — The scope and nature of Soviet strategic weapons deployment has puzzled senior Government analysts to the point where it may play an important role in the Administration's fight for an antiballistic missile system.

The issue came to light recently when Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird asserted there was "no question" that Russia was seeking "a first strike capability" against the United States. He credited new intelligence information with bringing him to this view.

Qualified sources say that the new evidence gathered by high-flying satellites shows the following:

¶The Soviet Union has a total of about 1,200 intercontinental ballistic missiles, in place or rapidly going into place, roughly 150 more land-based ICBM's than in America's arsenal.

¶After deploying about 225 giant SS-9 missiles the Russians abruptly stopped the program early last year, but then, in December, surprisingly started it up again.

¶The Russians are believed to have deployed a fractional orbiting bombardment system, a weapon that could only be used effectively in a first strike against so-called "soft" targets, such as bomber bases.

¶They are also testing new

multiple warheads for the SS-9.

As of last fall, the American intelligence community was convinced the Russians were merely following the American lead in building a secure "second strike" force that would enable them to ride out a surprise attack and then retaliate overwhelmingly.

The new information, centering on the SS-9, has raised a serious question in many officials' minds. However, Mr. Laird has apparently resolved that question to his own satisfaction in favor of assuming that the Russians are bent on upsetting the balance of power dramatically in their favor. Others in the Government are far from sure.

Secretary Laird's statement was made before a recent session of a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee that was strongly skeptical about the need for the \$6-billion to \$7-billion Safeguard antimissile system, designed in part to defend American's ICBM's against Soviet attack.

Without squarely disagreeing with Mr. Laird's assessment, Secretary of State William P. Rogers nonetheless told a news conference he doubted that the Russians had the "intention" of launching a first strike. But he said one of

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the first questions the United States would raise with the Russians when arms limitation talks got underway was: "Why would you have a 25-megaton missile?"

A megaton is equivalent to one million tons of TNT.

Since the Administration has apparently chosen to pitch much of its case for the missile defense system on the rising Soviet threat, the differing assessments within the Administration on the nature of that threat could well undermine its case.

Pace of Deployment

Back in 1965, when the Russians moved to a large-scale deployment of ICBM's, they concentrated on two second-generation liquid-fuel missiles: the SS-9, with a warhead of from 9 to 25 megatons, and the SS-11, with a warhead of slightly more than 25 megatons.

The pace of deployment was approximately 250 a year about 200 SS-11's for each 40 to 50 SS-9's. At the time, American analysts figured the Russians had simply put their development and production money on two different systems made by two separate design teams, just as the United States had done originally.

About 200 early model SS-7 and SS-8 missiles were retained in the Russian force as the new weapons went in.

Then, early last year, the Russians stopped deploying the SS-9 and slowed installation of the SS-11. At the same time it started putting in about 25 SS-13's, a new solid-fuel ICBM with a warhead of about one-megaton.

The feeling was the Russians thought they had almost as many ICBM's as they needed or wanted and would soon taper off.

But in December came evidence of a sudden resumption of SS-9 construction. Only a few missiles were involved but this raised concern because of the large payload of this system.

None Believed Accurate

The question was whether the Russians had decided to resume the earlier construction pace that would result in a total of about 500 SS-9's in five years.

None of the Soviet ICBM's is considered very accurate. The one-megaton missiles, however, are considered quite adequate for destroying cities. They are five times more powerful than the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

But the SS-9 makes up in

warhead size what it lacks in accuracy and thus could be used to try to destroy minute-man missiles in their steel-and-concrete silos.

More chilling yet is the possibility that the Russians would put accurately guided multiple warheads on the SS-9. The experts say it has enough thrust to carry three 4-to-5-megaton multiple warheads, or six 1-to-2-megaton warheads, or conceivably 18 200-kiloton warheads.

The Russians have been actively testing a three-part multiple warhead on the SS-9, sources say. But, as yet, these are not believed capable to separate guidance against different targets. Instead it is said, they land "like a string of beads" in a straight line.

There were three main theories on what the Russians are up to:

One school holds that they have powerful internal pressures to continue construction of at least some more missiles, a sort of Soviet "military-industrial complex."

Another group believes they have decided they ought to build a first-strike force, more to exploit as an implicit threat in future confrontations than to use suddenly one morning in a surprise attack.

A third group holds that the

Russians are interested in limiting damage in the Soviet Union in case deterrence fails and nuclear war breaks out. ICBM's that can destroy enemy missiles in their silos would limit damage on Russia fully as much as antimissile missiles.

Most Experts Undecided

Most analysts say the evidence is not at all clear enough to choose among these alternative strategies with confidence.

Mr. Laird, some officials point out, has the responsibility to make conservative judgments where the country's survival may be at stake and thus understandably wants to move ahead now to start the slow deployment of a defense for the Minuteman force.

(The Administration argued for the Safeguard system, additionally, as a full protection against ICBM's. Communist China is expected to have, in the mid-1970's and as a defense against a small number of missiles launched accidentally or without authorization from China, Russia or anywhere else.)

Those who lean to the Soviet first-strike school point to the Russian deployment of the fractional bomb system. It uses the same booster as the SS-9 ICBM, but carries a smaller warhead and is believed less

accurate. Its main feature is its ability to come in low, under the view of long-range radar, thus being potentially capable of destroying bombers before they can be warned and get airborne.

Such a weapon would be of little use unless employed in a first strike. After war had begun, the bombers would not be sitting around on their bases waiting to be hit.

Additionally, the Russians have long expressed interest in building a large missile defense system. So far they have deployed only 67 long-range defensive missiles around Moscow but are testing a more advanced model.

If the Russians installed a heavy defensive all around the country, this too could cut two ways. On the one hand it could limit damage if someone else started nuclear war. But it also could be used to knock down retaliatory American missiles that survived a Soviet first strike on the United States.

Administration officials hope a freeze on offensive and defensive missiles can foreclose these horrors. But they question whether the United States can safely start a unilateral freeze even before those long and difficult talks get under way.